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The **UNITED STATES:** **A** **NATION** *of* **VOLUNTEERS**



NATIONAL SERVICE
GOVERNMENT
CORPORATE AMERICA
EDUCATIONAL SECTOR
RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

FROM THE EDITORS

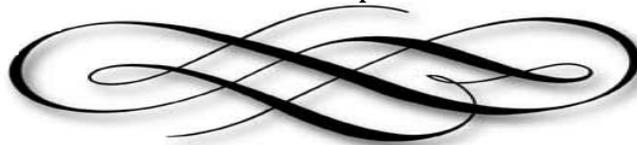
THE UNITED STATES: A NATION OF VOLUNTEERS

Every day, across the United States, countless numbers of people from all walks of life — as individuals or in groups — spend hours in service to others.

Why will one person spend time helping someone he or she does not know, close to home or far away? There are no easy answers.

Volunteering is, for some, a way of returning to the community some benefit received. For others, it is an ineffable experience that makes the volunteer “feel good.” And for still others, it can be a transforming experience — changing one’s perspective on people, on community and on society, and defining one’s purpose in life.

The series of articles in this journal will introduce readers first to the expanding role of volunteers in the United States today, and to the existing array of efforts — for example, in corporate America, within the educational and religious sectors, and at different levels of government. We offer overviews and personal reflections. Those who wish to pursue the subject further will find directions to sources that will provide a more extensive exploration.



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NURTURING CITIZEN SERVICE



BY

PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON

Service to one's community is an integral part of what it means to be an American. Citizen service is also at the heart of our efforts to prepare the United States for the 21st century, as we work to ensure that all Americans have the opportunity to make the most of their own lives and to help those in need.

AmeriCorps, the national service program that already has given more than 100,000 young people the opportunity to serve their country, has tied opportunity to responsibility. In community after community, AmeriCorps members have proven that service can help us meet our most pressing social needs. Indeed, independent evaluators who have reviewed AmeriCorps have concluded that national service yields a positive return on investment.

National service, though, has never been a substitute for the manifold contributions made by more than 90 million citizens across the United States who volunteer their time to worthy causes every year. Rather, as leaders of volunteer organizations have often maintained, national service has proven that the presence of full-time, trained

service participants enhances tremendously the effectiveness of volunteers.

Volunteers enrich our lives every day with their generosity and compassion. They cut across the fabric of society — from government on all levels to the educational sector, from the religious community to health care. They respond to myriad unforeseen developments and critical persistent needs. They react to the plight of those who suffer from severe weather hazards — in communities devastated by mud slides, ice storms, flash floods or tornadoes. Volunteers open their hearts and homes to offer not only shelter and food, but, most important, the hope and support people desperately need to begin putting their lives back together.

This spirit of citizen service has deep and strong roots in America's past. By nurturing this spirit we can help ensure a better future for our nation. ■

NATIONAL SERVICE:

GETTING THINGS DONE FOR AMERICA

BY HARRIS WOFFORD

NATIONAL SERVICE WILL BE AMERICA AT ITS BEST — BUILDING COMMUNITY, OFFERING OPPORTUNITY AND REWARDING RESPONSIBILITY. NATIONAL SERVICE IS A CHALLENGE FOR AMERICANS FROM EVERY BACKGROUND AND WALK OF LIFE, AND IT VALUES SOMETHING FAR MORE THAN MONEY. NATIONAL SERVICE IS NOTHING LESS THAN THE AMERICAN WAY TO CHANGE AMERICA.

— PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON, MARCH 1, 1993

With these words, President Clinton launched AmeriCorps and the Corporation for National Service, starting a new chapter in the long tradition of citizen service in America. Since 1993, millions of Americans have served in national service programs, bringing about lasting improvements in our communities and demonstrating that service can be an effective strategy for solving problems.

Recognizing that our strength as a nation depends on individuals who act on their commitment to help others, national service provides opportunities for all citizens to do their part. More and more Americans are taking advantage of those opportunities by tutoring and mentoring children, making neighborhoods safer, helping communities recover from natural disasters, building Habitat for Humanity homes, restoring parks and doing hundreds of other things to improve lives and bring people together.

Tapping the power of citizens to get things done will be even more important as we enter a new century full of challenges. No longer will we look to government to solve most of our problems. But just because government is being reduced, it doesn't mean our problems are going away. Indeed many of these problems — from crime and drugs to illiteracy and homelessness — are mounting.

To meet these challenges, we need to unleash the greatest power our country has — the energy and idealism of our people. If big government is not the answer, then we need big citizens, who can act on the problems that are mounting in our midst. This must be our aim — to crack the atom of civic power, and release it to solve our most pressing problems.

The Corporation for National Service — through its programs Learn & Serve America, the Senior Corps and AmeriCorps — is working with thousands of nonprofit partners to strengthen the voluntary sector and unleash citizen power. Our aim is to make service a rite of passage for every young person, a routine part of life for Americans of every age.

THE AMERICAN TRADITION OF SERVICE

Of course, citizen service is not a new idea in this country. Traveling across America in the 1830s, Alexis de Tocqueville observed that Americans did not wait for the government to act to solve a problem. If a school needed to be built, they built it. Tocqueville marveled at how Americans were constantly forming groups to meet common goals, and to this day, no country in the world has such a vast network of clubs, church and civic groups, and neighborhood organizations.

In this century, each new generation of Americans has risen to the challenge of service. In the Great Depression, four million young people joined the Civilian Conservation Corps, planting trees, restoring parks, and building roads, bridges and trails that we still enjoy today. In the 1940s, the GI Bill linked service with educational opportunity for the first time when a grateful nation rewarded its returning World War II veterans with funding for education.

For the next generation, the call to service came from President John F. Kennedy, who launched the Peace Corps in 1961. "Ask not what your country can do for you," President Kennedy declared. "Ask what you can do for your country." Since then, more than 140,000 Peace Corps volunteers have traveled to the poorest corners of the globe, building schools, helping farmers, treating the sick and building a

global community.

The 1960s also saw the birth of Volunteers in Service to America, or VISTA. For more than 30 years, VISTA has helped low-income communities help themselves. Along with VISTA, a diverse array of service programs began to grow up from the grassroots: conservation corps, urban youth corps, and service opportunities generated by high schools and colleges, businesses, churches and civic organizations.

The newest offspring in the service movement is AmeriCorps, created by Congress and President Clinton in 1993. AmeriCorps was built on the foundation of the first National Service Act, passed by President George Bush in 1990.

Since 1993, nearly 100,000 young people have served in AmeriCorps, helping solve problems in education, public safety, the environment and human needs. This year alone more than 40,000 AmeriCorps members will serve in more than 1,200 communities. In return for a year of full-time service, AmeriCorps members earn a living allowance and \$4,725 to pay for college or pay back student loans.

A FOCUS ON RESULTS

AmeriCorps' motto is "getting things done," and that focus on results has paid off in many tangible ways. In one year, AmeriCorps members taught or tutored 500,000 students, mentored 95,000 more, recruited 39,000 new volunteers, immunized 64,000 children, helped with disasters in over 30 states, worked with more than 3,000 safety patrols, and with local law enforcement and civilian groups, trained 100,000 people in violence prevention, built or rehabilitated 5,600 homes, helped put 32,000 homeless people in permanent residences, worked with people with AIDS and other serious diseases, and carried out a wide range of environmental projects.

A key part of the AmeriCorps' story is how full-time service expands traditional volunteering. America's largest volunteer organizations — including Big Brothers/Big Sisters, United Way, the YMCA and the American Red Cross — engage and utilize AmeriCorps members. They have seen how full-time AmeriCorps members help them accomplish more, recruit more volunteers and use volunteers more effectively. Studies have found that every AmeriCorps member on average will generate an additional 12 community volunteers.

AmeriCorps members feel deep pride about being involved in their communities and solving problems they didn't know they could solve. Ask Michelle Harvey, whose AmeriCorps team in Kansas City helped close 44 crack houses and keep her neighborhood free from drug dealers. Or Sean

Whitten, who used his AmeriCorps training to rescue a young woman who was lost for two days in the freezing cold mountains of Tennessee.

AmeriCorps is just one part of a larger family of programs overseen by the Corporation for National Service. That family includes more than 450,000 older American volunteers serving in the three programs of the Senior Corps — Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions and RSVP. America has the largest, fastest-growing, best-educated group of seniors in our history. We must do far more to realize the potential of over 50 million seniors, who bring to service a lifetime of skills and experience as parents, workers and citizens.

The other great pool of talent just waiting to be tapped is the 50 million young people in our schools, colleges and universities. Through Learn & Serve America, we're providing opportunities to nearly one million students from kindergarten through college to meet community needs while improving their academic skills and learning the habits of good citizenship. This program helps teachers integrate community service into the curriculum, a teaching method known as service learning. By serving, students develop teamwork, self-discipline and initiative — skills to help them become more productive workers and more responsible citizens.

National service in all its forms is helping meet a key national education goal. In the America Reads initiative, President Clinton challenged schools and communities to see that every American child reads by the end of the third grade. The president called for a citizen army of volunteer tutors to work in local afterschool or in-school literacy programs to give extra help needed by millions of children who are falling behind in their reading skills. He asked for additional AmeriCorps members and senior and college student volunteers to organize or expand tutoring programs and to provide direct tutoring. Congress has provided significant new funds for this expansion.

HELP FOR CHILDREN

Nowhere is America's volunteer energy more needed than in the caring and guiding and educating of our young. Young people today are exposed to risks that were unknown to our parents and grandparents, from AIDS to easy access to guns and drugs. One of four children are victims of assault or abuse. One in five lives below the poverty line. While overall crime rates are down, crime by juveniles is up — especially violent crime.

Mobilizing volunteers and other sectors of society to help America's children succeed was the key idea behind the Presidents' Summit for America's Future, held in Philadelphia in April 1997. With the

leadership of President Clinton and former President Bush, other former Presidents, General Colin Powell, 37 governors and top leaders from business, government and the nonprofit sector, the Summit called for a new era of citizen action in America to turn the tide for millions of children heading for disaster.

The campaign launched in Philadelphia — America's Promise, the Alliance for Youth — is now underway, led by General Powell and backed by all the former living presidents. America's Promise aims to provide to every young person in the United States the five resources they need for success: a caring adult (a mentor, a tutor, a coach); safe places to learn and grow; a healthy start; an effective education that assures the ability to read and provides marketable skills; and an opportunity for all young people to give back and themselves to serve.

The Corporation for National Service was proud to initiate and cosponsor the Summit in partnership with the Points of Light Foundation, and will continue to be in the forefront of this national campaign. Since the Summit, the Corporation has added nearly 9,000 new AmeriCorps members sponsored by community and faith-based organizations, helped recruit 1,000 colleges and universities to send work-study students to tutor elementary students, and launched Seniors in Schools with 700 senior volunteers in nine cities.

In addition to serving youth better, the Summit also launched a strategy to engage more young people themselves in service. Martin Luther King, Jr., said, "Everybody can be great because everybody can serve." Young people need to be challenged and inspired to discover and realize that greatness. All

young Americans should have a chance to see themselves — and be seen — as leaders and resources, not as problems or victims.

Former Michigan Governor George Romney, who had the dream of this Summit and worked until his death to make it happen, once said there is no free lunch when it comes to volunteering. It requires organization, time and resources from every sector — public, private and nonprofit. Just as we invest in roads and bridges to keep our economy strong, so must we invest in service and volunteering to keep our democracy strong. Healthy communities depend on informed, active citizens.

The secret heart of America and the secret to our success has always been our belief that we can change things, we can make things better, that working together we can solve our most difficult problems. As we enter a new century and a new era of limited government, that idea — and how we put it into practice — will be more important than ever. ■

Harris Wofford, a former U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania, is chief executive officer of the Corporation for National Service.

AMERICA'S VOLUNTARY SPIRIT

BY BRIAN O'CONNELL

“... Voluntary initiative has helped give America her national character...”

— Merle Curti, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian

The question is asked, is there still a civic spirit in the United States?

There is a pervasive view that in earlier times, Americans were far more willing than we are today to help one another and to become involved in causes and public issues. It almost seems a given to some that we are now a less caring society and that we should worry about what's happened to all that neighborliness, public spiritedness and charity.

Actually, the past was not nearly as good as remembered and the present is far better than perceived. A far larger proportion and many more parts of our population are involved in community activity today than at any time in our history.

Fifty percent of all Americans are now active volunteers. That's a staggering hundred million people, or one out of every two of us over the age of 13. And we devote an average of four hours a week to the causes of our choice. The base of participation is also spreading. There are more young people, more men and more senior citizens.

We organize to serve every conceivable aspect of the human condition and are willing to stand up and be counted on almost any public issue. We line up to fight zoning changes, approve bond issues, improve garbage collection, expose overpricing, enforce equal rights or protest wars. In very recent times we have successfully organized to deal with rights of women, conservation and preservation, learning disabilities, conflict resolution, Hispanic culture and rights, the aged, voter registration, the environment, Native Americans, the dying, experimental theater, international understanding, population control, neighborhood empowerment,

control of nuclear power, consumerism and on and on. Volunteers' interests and impact extend from neighborhoods to the ozone layer and beyond.

Three out of four U.S. citizens are regular contributors of money to charitable causes, and give more than \$1,000 per family each year. Almost 90 percent of giving comes from them. Foundations and business corporations, as important as they are, provide only 10 percent of all contributions. People of all incomes are involved, and contributors at the lower end of the scale are more likely to be generous than those better off.

From where does all this activity and generosity stem? Obviously, the United States is not the only participatory society in the world. Giving and volunteering occur in most countries, and nonprofit organizations can be found around the globe. But nowhere else are the numbers, proportions and impact so great.

It's not easy to sort out why there is so much more of this activity here, but if we hope to sustain it into future generations, we need to understand the phenomenon better than we do. The research and literature are sparse; still, one can begin to piece together an explanation.

Most often the participation is attributed to our Protestant ethic and English ancestry; but as important as they are, they are only two of many sources. What we identify as Judeo-Christian impulses were also brought to our shores by each wave of immigrants — from Sweden, Russia, China, India or elsewhere — who followed Jesus, Moses, Mohammed, Buddha or other sages and prophets.

One of the most fundamental explanations for voluntary activity centers on religious expression and protection of that freedom. The 1993 edition of Independent Sector's report, *From Belief to Commitment*, based on the largest study ever undertaken of the community service role of religious congregations, shows that these groups are the primary service providers for neighborhoods. It's

my experience that the poorer the community, the larger that role and impact.

Beyond the exercise of religious freedom and the community services provided by religious congregations, these institutions have been and continue to be the places where the moral issues are raised and pursued. In his mid-19th century observations on the American scene, Alexis de Tocqueville saw this country's network of voluntary organizations not so much as service providers but as "the moral associations" where such values as charity and responsibility to others are taught and where the nation's crusades take root.

As important as religious influences have been, we can't ascribe our tradition of voluntary action solely to their lessons of goodness. The matter of mutual dependence and assistance cannot be overlooked. The Minutemen in Revolutionary times (1775-1781) and the frontier families in the late 18th and early 19th centuries practiced basic forms of enlightened self-interest. To portray our history of volunteering as relating solely to goodness may describe the best of our forebears, but it ignores the widespread tradition of organized neighborliness that hardship dictated and goodness tempered.

One of the most striking points about the origins is that we shouldn't assume that these characteristics and traditions were imported. In *American Philanthropy*, historian Robert Bremner makes clear that the Native Americans treated us with far more "Christian" goodness than we practiced on them. Reading his descriptions of the kindly way in which the Native Americans greeted and helped us adjust to their world, one is absolutely wrenched out of prior notions about imported goodness.

We came into a country where there was very little structure. We had a chance to start all over again. For most people, for the first time in generations, the family hierarchy was absent. There were few built-in restraints imposed by centuries of laws and habits, and yet we were terribly interdependent. In the absence of families and controlling traditions, we addressed our dependence and gregariousness by becoming, as journalist-social commentator Max Lerner described it, "a nation of joiners." These new institutions — churches, unions, farmers' associations, fire companies or other specific organizations — became our networks for socializing and mutual activity.

It's also important to realize that we were people determined never again to be ruled by kings or emperors or czars and thus were suspicious of any central authority. We were resolved that power should be spread. This meant that voluntary institutions would accomplish in the United States what governments did in other countries. In "What Kind of Society Shall We Have?," an article written for Independent Sector, Richard W. Lyman, former president of Stanford University, reminds us of Edmund Burke's description of "the little platoons" of France that became America's own way for achieving dispersion of power and organization of mutual effort.

As we experienced the benefits of so much citizen participation, including the personal satisfactions that such service provides, we became all the more committed to this kind of participatory society. Along the way, we constantly renewed our faith in the basic intelligence and ability of people.

We have never found a better substitute for safeguarding freedom than placing responsibility in the hands of the people and expecting them to fulfill it. We can be disappointed at times in their performance, but the ultimate answer is still the democratic compact. There is still wisdom and comfort in Thomas Jefferson's advice that "if we think the people themselves...[are]...not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education."

We really meant and continue to mean what is written in the Declaration of Independence. We do believe in the rights and power of people, and these convictions cause us to stand up and be counted on a broad array of issues, and to cherish and fiercely defend the freedoms of religion, speech and assembly.

If we accept that our patterns and levels of participation and generosity contribute importantly to our national life, it is essential to understand and nurture all of the roots that give rise to such pluralism. One of the basic challenges is to be sure that the American people understand that there is this third way by which we address our problems and dreams.

Volunteering obviously begins with the individual — the golden rule and lending a hand. The hundred million Americans who volunteer are involved in an extraordinary array of acts of compassion and service. They inform, protest, assist, teach, heal, build, advocate, comfort, testify, support, solicit, donate, canvass, demonstrate, guide, feed, monitor and in many other ways serve people, communities and causes.

Beyond all the indications of the good that results when so many people do so many good things, it is important to recognize what all these efforts mean to the kind of people we are. All of this voluntary participation strengthens us as a nation, strengthens our communities, and strengthens and fulfills us as individual human beings.

The Pulitzer Prize-winning historian, Merle Curti, says, "Emphasis on voluntary initiative has helped give America her national character."

In examining most of the great citizen crusades of our history, what comes through again and again is that the participation, the caring and the evidence that people can make a difference add wonderfully to the spirit of our society. For example, in Inez Haynes Irwin's study of the fight for women's suffrage, she returns repeatedly to the spirit of those women, not only in deciding on the task and accomplishing it, but what their success meant to them as individual human beings. "They developed a sense of comradeship for each other which was half love, half admiration, and all reverence," Irwin writes. "In summing up a fellow worker, they speak first of her spirit, and her spirit is always beautiful, or noble, or glorious . . ."

When one thinks of the giants of the voluntary sector, one is likely to think of women's names, at least in the past 150 years — names like Clara Barton, Jane Addams, Mary McLeod Bethune, Susan B. Anthony, Dorothea Dix, Alice Paul, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Dorothy Day, Mother Seton, Carrie Nation, Margaret Sanger and Lucretia Mott.

In my recent book, *Voices From the Heart: In Celebration of America's Volunteers*, I depict volunteering through the experiences of 25 individuals, who reveal what they do, why they do it, and what the experience has meant to them.

Listen to some of their voices:

Scott Rosenberg is an artist who teaches at-risk teenagers to produce films and videos. He describes the experience: "On a visceral level, volunteering is a natural high. You get lifted in the right way when you work with people on something you believe in. It's arduous work, but you come away feeling exhilarated."

Valdimir Joseph, a college counselor, founded

Inner Strength, which provides mentoring for young African-American men. He says: "Everyone has something to offer. Working with other volunteers has helped give me strength. They are struggling, too. I feel empowered watching volunteers develop relationships with these kids, watching them both grow. . . . Everyone I've met who volunteers, even if they only do two hours a week, makes a difference in someone's life."

Amber Coffman, a teenager, provides food to the homeless and summarizes her reaction: "It's about changing people's lives because of a few volunteers who get together on weekends and just give from the heart. That's what gets me up early when I don't feel like making lunches. I do it because of the wonderful feelings involved with giving. Once you truly give of yourself, you're hooked for life."

John Gatus, a retired steamfitter, supervises an anti-gang street patrol and reflects: "Volunteer work brings real change, change you can be a part of, change you can see with your own eyes. You don't need politicians or the police to tell you things are better. You can see it and feel it for yourself and know you were a part of it. . . . There's a real pride involved. We're part of the community."

Katherine Pener has counseled post-surgery breast cancer patients for 22 years and proclaims: "I guarantee anyone who volunteers will feel better emotionally, physically and psychologically. I don't care who you are or what you do. The people I know who volunteer have smiles on their faces. The hours they give are worth more to them than any money they could ever receive."

Volunteers usually work together to increase their reach and results. There are more than a million charitable organizations officially registered with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service ranging from small community groups to national crusades. That number doesn't include most religious congregations, mutual assistance groups or local chapters of large national organizations such as the American Cancer Society. Also not counted are the less formal groups concerned and involved with everything from prenatal care to cemeteries. Altogether, the total is at least three million and growing.

Voluntary organizations include major institutions such as universities, museums and hospitals; large national crusades such as the American Heart Association and the National Trust for Historic Preservation; and local associations dealing with almost every possible cause and concern.

There are three general roles that volunteer organizations assume: service (such as youth hostels), advocacy (such as Americans for Indian Opportunity), and empowerment (such as the National Organization for Women).

Voluntary organizations provide individuals with interconnections to extend almost every important element of their private lives including religious expression and mutually beneficial projects. A great many of these relationships are informal, but many require some structure, which leads to the creation of associations.

Whether one's interest is wildflowers or civil rights, arthritis or clean air, oriental art or literacy, the dying or the unborn, organizations are already at work; and if they don't suit our passion, it's still a wonderful part of America that we can go out and start our own.

Social activist and onetime government official John Gardner says that "almost every major social breakthrough in America has originated in this voluntary sector.

"If volunteers and voluntary organizations were to disappear from our national life, we would be less distinctly American. The sector enhances our creativity, enlivens our communities, nurtures individual responsibility, stirs life at the grass roots, and reminds us that we were born free. Its vitality is rooted in good soil — civic pride, compassion, a philanthropic tradition, a strong problem-solving impulse, a sense of individual responsibility and an irrepensible commitment to the great shared task of improving our life together."

It is this joining together of compassion, spirit and power that often makes the difference for the most serious issues facing all of us. Such enormous and complicated problems as cancer and poverty require thousands of volunteers focusing on service, prevention, public awareness and public policy.

Usually when examples of volunteer power and impact are cited, they relate to the distant past — to such issues as slavery, women's suffrage and child labor laws. As important as those examples are, their constant repetition tends to support the notion that things of significance are less likely to occur today.

It is my distinct experience that in just the past quarter-century, there has been an absolute explosion of citizen impact on a vast range of human considerations. For instance, in just the past 20 years, volunteers have broken through centuries of indifference to the needs of the dying. As a result of their noble crusade, almost every community today has hospice services providing relief to the terminally ill and their families.

In very recent times, volunteers' passion, courage and tenacity have forced the nation and every region in it to realize that we must preserve for future generations our precious resources of water, air and land. That ethic and practice are now spread to every form of local and national asset including wetlands, forests, farmland, historic buildings and

entire urban centers.

Volunteers stood up and were counted on behalf of common decency and adequate services for retarded children, and with those breakthroughs showed the way to many others who then dared to do the same for cerebral palsy, autism, learning disabilities and hundreds of other problems we hadn't even heard of a few decades ago.

With the establishment and growth of Alcoholics Anonymous, volunteers pioneered a model of mutual assistance that today extends to almost every serious personal problem. In almost every community there's a group of people who have weathered the storm and are reaching out to others newly faced with such threatening crises as death of a child, mastectomy, depression, stroke or physical abuse.

And all the time a number of people served by promoting the importance and availability of arts and cultural opportunities as central aspects of a civilized society. One of the great waves of voluntary activity and impact has involved community theater, dance and music to provide opportunities for creativity and enjoyment of it.

The list goes on almost endlessly with preschool education, day care, social services, cancer control, consumerism, population control, conflict resolution, ethnic museums, early infant care, independent living for the elderly, teen pregnancy, substance abuse and job training — which, when taken together, blanket the U.S. social landscape.

Through our voluntary initiative and independent institutions, ever more Americans worship freely, study quietly, are cared for compassionately, experiment creatively, serve effectively, advocate aggressively and contribute generously. These national traits are constantly beautiful and must remain beautifully constant. ■

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THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES

Few people have turned retirement into an opportunity for volunteerism with more enthusiasm than former U.S. President Jimmy Carter. Now 73, he is chairman of the nonprofit Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia. In this article, he explains why he spends his time volunteering, and why he finds it so satisfying.

BY JIMMY CARTER
FROM BUSINESS WEEK

and elsewhere, we have helped resolve conflicts and defuse potentially explosive crises. We've spent weeks in remote villages in Africa, teaching residents how to eradicate Guinea worm disease and handing out free medicine to control river blindness. In other parts of Africa,

When I retired from the White House in 1980 (four years earlier than planned), Rosalynn and I were faced with deciding how to spend the rest of our lives. We were fairly young — both in our 50s — and unemployed. We went directly from Washington to our home in Plains, Georgia (population 700), where I had not lived since I was elected governor of the state [in 1970].

You can imagine that this was not an easy transition. But we agreed that Plains was our home and where we wanted to stay. I had no desire to run again for public office, so we started thinking about how we could use some of the skills and experience we had acquired over the years to work on issues that had always been important to us.

We did a lot of soul-searching that first year. Out of this process came the idea for the Carter Center [www.cartercenter.org]. We envisioned a nonprofit center, not affiliated with any government or political party, where we could bring people and resources together to promote peace and improve health around the world. We opened our center on the campus of Emory University in 1983, and moved into our permanent headquarters, adjacent to the newly built Jimmy Carter Library and Museum, in 1986.

Over the years, Rosalynn and I have turned retirement into another career through our work at the Carter Center. And I have to say that our post-presidential years have been even more fulfilling than our years in public office. On behalf of the Center, we have traveled to more than 115 countries. In North Korea, Haiti, Nicaragua, Liberia, the Sudan

we've helped farmers increase grain and corn production as much as 400 percent using simple, inexpensive agricultural practices. We've advanced human rights and helped Third World countries draft master plans for development.

At home in the United States, Rosalynn has continued her efforts on behalf of the mentally ill, building on her work as First Lady of Georgia and of the United States. We've helped inner city residents in Atlanta develop strategies to improve their lives, sharing what we've learned with more than 100 other cities. And when we're not working for the Carter Center, we spend a week each year building homes with other volunteers for Habitat for Humanity in the United States and in other countries.

All these projects have enriched my life in untold ways. I've learned things I never knew as a state senator or governor or even president. While reaching out to others, Rosalynn and I have filled our own needs to be challenged and to act as productive members of our global community.

Along the way, we've also found others seeking opportunities to lend time, experience and resources to alleviate suffering and improve lives. For example, at the Carter Center, we pool our resources with those of our many partners — including corporations, foundations and individuals. I've visited with employees of donor organizations, including Merck, DuPont and United Parcel Service. Many were moved to tears when I told them how their companies' donations have helped free villages in Africa from Guinea worm disease and river blindness, or have eased the struggles of a family in our own country.

Let me give you another example of how

retirement has changed our view of the world. Rosalynn and I have led Carter Center teams to observe — and sometimes mediate — free and fair elections in some 15 countries. In 1990, we stood in line with Haitians at the polling place where just three years earlier, dozens of people had been killed by government-sponsored terrorists while trying to vote. Many had risen in the middle of the night to walk ten or 15 miles to stand in that same line — even though they feared for their lives. As we traveled around Port-au-Prince that day, we talked to people who had waited hours just for the opportunity to vote — a sacred privilege we and others often take for granted here in the United States.

We live in a land of opportunity, and our retirement from political life has opened a whole new world of excitement and challenges. For us, retirement has not been the end, but a new beginning. We hope to spend many more years actively making the most of the rest of our lives. ■

Jimmy Carter was president of the United States from 1977 to 1981. This article has been cleared for republication by the press outside the United States except the local press in India, Japan, Spain, Russia and Thailand. Credit to the author and the publication should appear on the title page of any reprint. Abridged from Business Week, July 20, 1998.



VOLUNTEERISM



THE GOVERNMENT SECTOR

BY SUSAN J. ELLIS

President Abraham Lincoln's immortal phrase that the United States government is "of the people, by the people, for the people" is proven every day by volunteers. The fact is that despite what some may think, not every government worker is on the payroll.

A common misconception is that volunteering involves activities solely for nonprofit organizations. Because of the term "voluntary sector," the general presumption is that volunteer work and private voluntary agencies go hand in hand. This is too narrow a view. In fact, a very large percentage of American volunteers assist government units at the local, county, state and national levels.

Consider the following places where volunteers can routinely be found:

- Public schools and public libraries.
- Local parks and recreation programs.
- Community and U.S. military and veterans hospitals.
- Centers for services to the aging.
- Facilities housing family and child counseling and protection services.
- Courts, jails and prisons, probation and parole departments.
- Homeless shelters.

In these settings, citizens work as volunteers alongside employees as a team. They perform assignments identified by the staff as appropriate and important.

An examination of the interrelationship of government and volunteering in the United States must take into account four distinct categories:

- Volunteering done on behalf of government by citizen volunteers, by choice and without remuneration.

- Volunteering done by government officials and employees as an extension of their commitment to the community, but without additional compensation.

- Citizen activities seeking to affect political or social life through lobbying, protesting, advocating or advising on a wide range of issues.

- Government programs that bring about community service by special categories of citizens. This includes voluntary but stipended service and "mandated" service, particularly within school districts, the criminal justice system and the new welfare reform system. This category can be controversial.

VOLUNTEERING BY CITIZENS

U.S. citizens are accustomed to a high standard of police, fire and emergency services. In rural areas, these would be nonexistent if it were not for the involvement of community members as volunteers. Even in the nation's largest cities, volunteers are a critical element in ensuring public safety. Indeed, volunteers account for an astonishing 80 percent of the national firefighting force. Depending on the size of the community, there may be a paid fire chief, quasi-governmental authority and some flow of tax dollars. Still, most of those who are involved in all aspects of firefighting, running the companies, and fundraising to purchase equipment are volunteers. Suburban communities may supplement a weekday paid force with evening and weekend volunteers, when commuting homeowners are back in their houses, close enough to respond to an alarm.

Similarly, other emergency services rely on volunteer effort. Citizen first-aid specialists serve industry and the community. They staff volunteer ambulance corps and paramedical groups, and provide first response to rescue people who are



trapped or immobilized in some way. This even extends to the National Ski Patrol that offers aid on wintry mountain slopes.

Volunteers are the silver lining in the cloud of disaster. They mobilize to assist officials in time of flood, fire, earthquakes, tornadoes and hurricanes; build barricades and dikes; provide emergency shelter and care; clear debris; and then help to rebuild afterward.

Crime prevention is another focal point of volunteer activity. Citizens police their own communities in "neighborhood watches" for mutual protection, and provide safe houses for children along school routes. Volunteers directly support police departments by handling non-emergency police functions such as supporting juvenile diversion activities, assisting at parades and public ceremonies, and traffic control. They staff police reserve units and auxiliaries; gather and analyze statistics. "Crimesolvers" projects encourage witnesses to provide clues that can lead to the apprehension of criminals. Volunteers also help in searches for missing persons. Finally, civilian review boards monitor police department practices to ensure compliance with legal standards and human rights protections.

In cases where crime could not be prevented, volunteers are also on hand to help the courts and the correctional system. They handle a variety of assignments — serving as court watchers, probation and parole mentors, temporary foster parents, counselors and recreation aides. Teen juries of youthful volunteers help in reaching dispositions for juvenile offenders, while adult volunteers staff arbitration boards. Volunteers assist victims of crime as they go through the legal process and give similar aid to crime witnesses who agree to testify. Finally, the various bar associations — national, state and local — consider it a professional obligation to coordinate *pro bono* legal services to indigent clients.

In prisons and correctional institutions, community volunteers visit inmates and act as activity leaders, instructors, lay ministers and counselors. As inmates leave prison, volunteers assist with a variety

of re-entry services for ex-offenders, ranging from locating housing and jobs to supportive counseling.

The very word "community" implies mutual aid and cooperative action. Many of the volunteer roles mentioned above contribute substantially to the quality of life in a community. Certainly at the neighborhood level, the integration of local government and its citizens can be quite personal. Government coordination and volunteer action combine to increase public safety, public health and the quality of public education. This even extends to neighborhood clean-up campaigns, anti-litter and "adopt a highway" programs and community gardens. Civic events such as parades, holiday festivities or community concerts may be coordinated by a government employee, but the helping hands (and feet!) of many volunteers are vital.

Some cities and counties have an Office of Volunteers that places interested citizens into assignments, including helping with the daily work of government offices. Registrants at professional volunteer management conferences reflect the wide variety of government staffers who are responsible for recruiting and working with volunteers. In addition to employees connected to the types of volunteer programs already described, paid coordinators of volunteers function at the Internal Revenue Service (its VITA program helps thousands of older and poor citizens to file their tax returns), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (engaging scientists and interested citizens in support of space exploration), and the National Park Service (fielding volunteers at every national park site). Volunteers turn up in many other unexpected places — such as Virginia Beach, Virginia, where the local streets department recruits neighborhood volunteers to communicate information on street repairs and construction projects.

In a time of searching for values, we can look to volunteers as one source of inspiration. Similarly, volunteering in a government program activates citizenship.

There are many reasons for welcoming citizen participation. One is purely economic: Volunteer services stretch available tax dollars to cover even more than would have been possible otherwise. This is a way to keep taxes manageable and still provide seriously needed programs. But the value of volunteering is far greater than financial. When residents participate in providing government services, they develop a sense of ownership, a commitment to community improvement that is both the right and privilege of a taxpayer.



THE MILITARY

Americans speak of the U.S. military as a “volunteer army.” What we mean, of course, is that it is an army made up of people who chose to enlist (United States citizens no longer have a mandatory military service requirement). Military service for some is a job and for others a career. Its members are salaried, and are offered lifelong financial benefits. But there are unpaid supporters — volunteers — on hand as well.

Throughout U.S. history, volunteers have been on the front lines and on the home front in support of war efforts — and, occasionally, to protest the use of military force. In addition, there is an expansive system of military reserve units, National Guard companies and civil defense programs in place. In times of war, volunteers have provided a wide range of support services to those at the front. The United Service Organization has had an impressive history of arranging tours by leading entertainers and other personalities to troops on the battlefronts, and also continues to provide facilities for rest and recuperation to military personnel on leave.

Voluntary support involves other projects as well — for instance, keeping lines of communication open to fighting men and women through correspondence and holiday gift-giving, programs that normally mobilize thousands, often including elementary schoolchildren and civic groups. This support extends to families awaiting the return of loved ones in the military. Think, for a moment, about the volunteers who coordinated the yellow ribbon distributions and placements across the United States during Operation Desert Storm. Other citizens spend leisure time working in veterans hospitals. Furthermore, citizen efforts rally all Americans to commemorate fallen personnel on specific holidays, and to raise funds for statues and monuments in their memory.

Each branch of the armed services maintains a social service delivery system that involves volunteers in counseling service people and their families, particularly for marital problems and spouse employment (examples are the Army Community Service and the National Guard Family Support Program). When the military and the nation are faced with concerns about personnel missing in action, or captured as prisoners of war, or

held hostage, affected families and other volunteers work to obtain information about, and speed the return of, these Americans in peril.

Often, military campaigns have elicited strong responses from groups of citizens. Whether the scale of activity is modest — such as writing individual letters to legislators — or more ambitious, such as participating in a protest rally in Washington — it is volunteer-driven. It is a sign of a healthy democracy that debate about military engagement can occur publicly. And both sides use the same tactics: petitions, marches, rallies and the efforts of as many volunteers as possible.

VOLUNTEERING BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Although the general impression is that government workers are paid, the fact is that in smaller and rural communities, many local government services are only needed on a part-time basis. It is possible to extend resources, therefore, by having a community’s citizenry volunteering for a host of responsibilities. In tiny communities, town officials often serve without pay or with only a modest stipend for expenses. Similarly, all levels of government create “commissions,” advisory councils and task forces to oversee or advise on a wide array of public activities. Members of these groups are usually drawn from the private sector, and therefore receive little or no remuneration. School board members, though typically elected, also serve without a salary.

It is interesting to note that every candidate for political office is a “volunteer.” None receives a government paycheck until (and unless) elected. The U.S. political process requires the involvement of thousands of volunteers for election campaigns and political party activities — ranging from distributing leaflets to monitoring the polls on Election Day.

Workplace volunteering is of keen interest these days. A growing number of businesses are encouraging their employees to volunteer on their own time — and even on company time.

Government, as a major employer, also sponsors this type of community building. Police officers, for example, organize volunteer opportunities, often aimed at young people. Local chapters of the Police Athletic League and DARE (a drug awareness program in primary and secondary schools across the United States) exist only because of volunteers. Throughout the country, government agencies at every level participate in locally sponsored days of service, encouraging teams of employees, for instance, to clean up parks. On an individual basis,



elected officials often continue personal volunteer work they began before running for office, or accept new volunteer work as role models for others. A number of governors and mayors tutor young people, coach youth sports, or deliver meals to the homebound.

CITIZEN ADVOCACY

From the early colonial days, town meetings were vital for fostering participatory democracy. In colonial times, the town meeting represented local government in its totality, a tradition upheld today in only a few New England towns. But even as the 20th century comes to a close, town meetings and public hearings bring out vocal and active citizens seeking input on the policies that affect their lives. Every time an American writes to his or her Congressional representative, it is volunteerism in action. So, too, are all other advocacies for a cause on all levels of government — to change laws and procedures, to educate the public or to enhance a community — through marches and other forms of demonstration. The causes can be as modest as the placement of traffic signals and speed bumps in a local neighborhood.

GOVERNMENT-CREATED COMMUNITY SERVICE

One final example of volunteerism within government is the community service that has arisen as a result of government legislation. It has given rise to a burning question that preoccupies many in the volunteer sectors — namely, can those who are paid for work or compelled to do it be identified as volunteers?

On a national level, this issue first arose when President John F. Kennedy created the Peace Corps in 1961. The U.S. Government offered funds for lodging, food and incidentals to anyone making an intensive two-year commitment to represent the United States in service abroad. As Peace Corps members would not be allowed to hold an outside paying job during their tenure, this modest monthly sum was designed to ensure that any qualified

American — on any economic level — could join the Peace Corps. Members who have served, and still serve, do so voluntarily. As a result, notwithstanding the subsidy for expenses, Peace Corps members, as well as participants in VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), are regarded as volunteers. (The latest example of stipended service, AmeriCorps, promulgated under President Clinton, provides an end-of-term education benefit to the living allowance sum.)

To coordinate these programs, known collectively as “national service,” President Nixon created a U.S. Government agency called ACTION. President Clinton replaced it with a broader-based body, the Corporation for National Service. It includes AmeriCorps, the Senior Corps (for citizens 55 and above), Learn & Serve America (fostering school-based service) and America Reads (a literacy program). Funded by federal tax dollars matched by state and local money, the Corporation fans its participants out into nonprofit agencies, schools or local government projects involving children with special educational, physical or psychological needs.

But despite the enthusiastic participation by tens of thousands of citizens, is this volunteerism? When does a living allowance become a stipend, and when is that considered simply a low-income wage? The debate continues, but as it does, a corps of willing and energetic men and women of all ages provide services they would be unlikely or unable to offer without the modest expense sums.

Another unusual example of government-created community service is the battery of programs established to enable people to “work off” taxes or fines. Seniors on fixed incomes or low-income wage-earners are afforded the chance to contribute a certain number of hours of community service annually so as to reduce or eliminate any cash payment obligations they may have to their jurisdiction. These programs are locally based; there is no comparable national scheme. And it is the citizen’s choice whether or not to participate. Generally, though, the risks are few and opportunities great.

This issue of community service comes up in other spheres as well. Public schools set requirements for students to complete a fixed number of hours of service in their locale as a prerequisite for graduation. Courts offer adults and juveniles the choice of a prescribed number of hours of service in lieu of fine or incarceration (this is often called “alternative sentencing”), or ordering the offender to provide such service in addition to probation or parole. And welfare reform efforts add the option of service to that of payroll employment or education as a way to maintain public assistance benefits.



Because of the conflict over terms and definitions that can arise, these types of programs are generally referred to as “community service” rather than “volunteering.” In practice, though, an organization’s volunteer office accepts, trains and manages these special categories of workers. Furthermore, statistics show that in many instances, if these workers are treated well and enjoy their assignments, a percentage of them will continue their tasks beyond the minimum number of hours specified. In the last analysis, then, mandated or directed service can lead, eventually, to true volunteerism.

As we have seen, there are many dimensions to government-related volunteering. In the United States, government at all levels depends upon citizen involvement in a wide variety of ways — part of the nature of civil society and civic engagement. When one considers the services performed by government employees, and by citizens deployed through specific government volunteer programs, the importance of this facet of the volunteer world becomes mightily clear. ■

Susan J. Ellis is president of Energize, Inc., a Philadelphia-based training, consulting and publishing firm specializing in volunteerism. Energize works internationally to assist nonprofit, government and corporate clients to develop or strengthen volunteer efforts of all kinds. Ellis is the author or co-author of nine books, and writes a national column, On Volunteers, for The NonProfit Times. Energize’s website is www.energizeinc.com.

FINDING TIME

BY GENE ROSE

One trades analyzing numbers for riding bikes. Another puts down a gavel and picks up a hockey stick. Yet another takes off a tie to wear a uniform.

Across the country, state legislators and legislative staff — with little fanfare — extend their public service commitment beyond normal business hours in an effort to make their communities and states better places to live. They attend everything from auctions to potluck suppers and sometimes even get a physical workout to help state and community causes.

Like all Americans who devote time, energy and money to their favorite organizations, the charity work of those involved with state legislatures often is done behind the scenes and with little public notice. Here are a few examples that reached our desks.

PERSONALLY INVOLVED

How does a 55-year-old breast cancer survivor get on with her life after two mastectomies in six years? If she is Mary Noble, deputy state auditor of California and chair of the National Legislative Program Evaluation Society, she rides her bicycle hundreds of miles across central Alaska to raise funds to help others who are battling the disease.

This year, Noble will join 19 other women, most of whom are themselves breast cancer survivors, on a six-day, 350-mile bike ride sponsored by the San Francisco-based Breast Cancer Fund. The riders will start near Mount McKinley, proceed through Fairbanks to the port of Valdez and finish, after a

ferry transit, in the city of Anchorage. Noble plans to carry the names of breast cancer survivors, as well as the names of some who have died from the disease, with her on her journey.

Although her prognosis for complete recovery is good, she says, “You have to live with [breast cancer] and hope for the best.”

Pledges for her Alaska ride far exceeded her initial goal. “Never in my wildest dreams did I think this could happen,” she says, citing donations from friends and co-workers, as well as “people I had never heard of” from as far away as New York.

Another outlet for Noble includes taking part in triathlons (three-segment distance/speed competitions involving swimming, biking and running), an activity she began five years ago. In fact, only a week after she returns from Alaska she will participate in a triathlon in San Jose, California, part of a national series that benefits the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation.

CHASING CHILDHOOD IDOLS

A charity hockey game featuring a team of current and former legislators and legislative staff — called the “State Capitol Sticks” — against alumni from the professional National Hockey League’s Detroit Red Wings was arranged by Michigan House of Representatives Speaker Curtis Hertel, the Red Wings owners and the Hospice of Michigan. The match-up resulted in a \$10,000 donation for the nonprofit organization that provides care to people living with a terminal illness.

Members of the Sticks donated money for the right to play against such Red Wing alumni greats as Gary Bergman, Alex Delvecchio and Dennis Hextall. The rest of the funds came from fans attending the sometimes competitive but always entertaining 15-13 Red Wings’ victory.

"It was truly an honor to play for charity and in a game we love," says Speaker Hertel, "especially against a team of great Red Wing alumni."

The Sticks have been raising money in charity hockey games since 1994.

COMPETITION FOR A GOOD CAUSE

Missouri, like many other states, puts together charitable events to give lawmakers and staff an opportunity to compete and socialize outside the legislative arena. A baseball tournament, basketball games, bowling contests and even a skeet shoot take place annually to raise money for various charities. The baseball tournament this year donated its proceeds to the Emily Stoll Scholarship Fund, named for Representative Steve Stoll's daughter, who died in a car accident in 1997.

House of Representatives Appropriations Director Stephen Price and his staff coordinate an annual volleyball tournament that's earned about \$4,000 for cystic fibrosis research over the years. Part of the tournament ceremony includes presenting T-shirts to children the organization works to help. Some of the children recognized at the earlier tournaments have been lost to the disease.

"The human aspect of it really hits close to home," says Price. "All of a sudden some of those kids are not here anymore."

Price serves on local charity boards, including Score Against Hunger. The program, in which donations are based on how many points the University of Missouri-Columbia football team scores, raises funds for the Central Missouri Food Bank.

Other legislative sporting events, like golf tournaments, are held to raise funds. House Speaker Steve Gaw oversees the Hall of Famous Missourians, a capitol display of notable state residents throughout history. His tournament raises money to commission new bronze busts. Gaw and other lawmakers also participate in a program promoting literacy in their legislative districts.

"Not only is it important for young children to have an interest in reading, the sessions allow me to hear from those children," he says. "They seem not to have a problem saying what they think about anything. And when you read through a story, particularly one that has a message, they have some great insight."

RESPONDING TO TRAGEDY

In Maine, the unrelated and unexpected deaths of Representative Stephen Gould and page David Michaud resulted in what is now called the Legislative Memorial Scholarship Fund. Auctions held since 1981 raise funds for the scholarships, which initially were available at only two state university sites.

The legislature formed a scholarship committee in 1995 to oversee the fund, which now awards scholarships to state residents attending any accredited college or university. Sixteen \$500 scholarships, one for each county, are presented each year. The 1998 fund-raising auction raised more than \$7,000.

Oklahoma Representative Mike Mass last April co-hosted a fund raiser for an infant known as "Baby K," who survived a shooting that killed her mother and her mother's boyfriend. The event generated \$10,000 for an educational trust fund for the child.

Since then, Mass has teamed up with Judy Benson, wife of House Speaker Lloyd Benson, to sponsor events raising tens of thousands of dollars for the Oklahoma Campaign for Kids. The proceeds are earmarked for prevention of child abuse and support services for abused and neglected children.

The Bensons also host the annual Speaker's Ball in Oklahoma, which has raised more than \$360,000 for the Foundation for Excellence during the last nine years. So far the fund raiser has endowed an annual award to the Oklahoma school deemed to have the best dropout prevention program. Funds are now being raised to endow an annual award for an elementary school teacher.

DUTY TO COUNTRY

Mike Coffman, now a Colorado senator, celebrated his reelection as a second-term member of the Colorado House of Representatives in 1990 on the sands of Kuwait. As a member of the Marine Corps Reserves when the Gulf War broke out, he went from a policymaking role to an executive role. "Both are equivalent of combat," he says.

Several lawmakers from across the country are also members of the National Guard. John Goheen, spokesman for the National Guard Association, says the National Guard is full of "people who care about their communities, states and nation. And you're going to see a lot of these same folks working in the public sector. It's extremely natural for people who devote their life to public service to be in the Guard."

LEARNING IN THE LEGISLATURE

“When I began my first session, I realized that no one was lobbying for the children and no one was lobbying for the victims,” says Texas Senator Florence Shapiro. “I realized that a lot more needed to be done that couldn’t be done in the legislature.”

Once a week she goes to a school in Plano, where she served as mayor before being elected to the senate, to mentor a child. The 90-minute sessions focus on reading, spelling and talking about life experiences.

Shapiro, who has three grown children, began donating her time to organizations such as the Collin County Advocacy Center, which helps abused and neglected children, and a domestic violence center called the Family Place. She and one of her daughters volunteer two Saturdays a month at the Children’s Medical Center in Dallas.

The Texas senator’s advertising agency often performs *pro bono* work for these organizations, such as printing brochures and writing press releases.

“So often groups like this need spokespersons and to have someone become an advocate,” she says.

ANSWERING THE CALL

For every story told here, there are hundreds of other examples of legislators and legislative staff who unselfishly donate their time, money and effort to their communities.

“Everybody owes a duty back to the rest of humankind to repay some of the things that were given,” says Missouri Speaker Gaw. “I think public service and giving back to your state and country is something that is important if it is to be a better place for everyone, including the one who is giving of their time and effort.”

By serving in the legislature, he says, “you see the great things that are going on and things that need improvement. Serving in the legislature puts you one step closer to understanding and being able to do something about it.”

Colorado Senator Coffman agrees, “You’re used to making sacrifices by being a legislator,” he says. “I think the type of person attracted to public service in the legislature is the type of person willing to serve in a number of capacities, whether it be their community, state or nation.” ■

Gene Rose is public affairs director of the National Conference of State Legislatures. Staff member Scott Liddell and various state legislative public information officers contributed to this article, which was abridged and reprinted from the July-August 1998 issue of State Legislatures.

VOLUNTEERISM



CORPORATE AMERICA

BY BETTY B. STALLINGS

"We need to move beyond the walls of the corporation...with the same energy and commitment we invested to build the enterprise within the walls. Moving beyond the walls is not a matter of altruism; it is enlightened self-interest, a business necessity."

— Peter F. Drucker, management expert

A growing "army" of employee volunteers is working in communities across the United States. Wearing t-shirts with company logos, they clean off graffiti, collect and distribute food to the hungry, build houses for the poor, coordinate and assist at athletic competitions for the physically challenged, or teach children with learning disabilities how to read.

For years, employee volunteerism was viewed as peripheral activity. Recent research on the purpose, value and impact of this corporate employee movement, however, has demonstrated that it has strategic value to the communities, to the corporations and to participants themselves.

A corporate volunteer program is any formal or organized company effort for employees and retirees who wish to volunteer their time and skills in service to the community. Such support might include:

- serving as the information and referral agency for volunteer opportunities in communities in which the corporation is situated and operates.
- developing and managing group employee volunteer projects such as clean-up days.
- conducting recognition programs to show appreciation to employees who volunteer.
- arranging team-building and human resource development activities around volunteer projects.

It is increasingly common for corporations to release workers during the day or early at the end of the day to perform these voluntary services. Recent studies indicate that more than 50 percent of the top firms in the United States have a release time policy.

THE EVOLUTION OF EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERISM

The development of this type of service stemmed from growing recognition, early in this century, of the inherent interdependence between business and communities. Businesses' stability and success are closely tied to their local economy and social environment.

Early philanthropic efforts focused more on donated dollars than on volunteer time. They stressed giving, or in-kind services, to a variety of causes rather than on creating a niche interest in a particular sector such as education or health.

In the 1970s, under the leadership of the Business Roundtable's "statement of responsibility," the term "socially responsible corporation" suggested a corporate community strategy based on a constituency involving customers, suppliers, communities and shareholders. (The Business Roundtable is an association of chief executive officers of leading U.S. companies who examine and develop positions which seek to reflect sound economic and social principles.)

In the decade that followed, the American Express Corporation coined the phrase "cause-related marketing," describing the mutually beneficial relationship between sponsorships and promotions for nonprofit organizations and social causes. Because of cynicism regarding this apparent self-serving activity, the business sector — in the 1990s — moved into more issues-based marketing strategies focusing on a community issue particularly relevant to the corporation. (For example, a pharmaceutical company might contribute corporate funds and volunteer resources to health-related issues.)

More recently, the focus is on designing philanthropic programs parallel to the strategic business goals of the corporation, and focusing on partnerships with community organizations. By creating joint venture initiatives with nonprofit organizations, businesses can now share their resources in new, creative ways that encourage mutual gains for themselves, for individual employees and for the community.

During the 1990s, employee volunteering soared. Percentages of cash versus noncash contributions changed from 80/20 in the 1980s to 60/40 in the 1990s (Corporate Philanthropy Report, 1996). During the administration of President George Bush, corporate volunteering received a boost from the Office of National Service, and from the Points of Light Foundation, formation of which President Bush spearheaded to promote volunteerism.

A 1993 report by the Conference Board (a non-profit, non-advocacy group, one of the world's leading business membership and research organizations, connecting senior executives from more than 2,900 enterprises in more than 60 countries through its publications and meetings) and the Points of Light Foundation revealed the following:

- ❑ 92 percent of corporate executives surveyed encouraged their staffers to become involved in community service.
- ❑ 77 percent of companies agreed that volunteer programs benefit corporate strategic goals.
- ❑ about four-fifths of volunteer programs studied were reported to improve employee retention and enhance training.
- ❑ half of the respondents made community service a part of the company's mission statement.
- ❑ 31 percent claimed to use volunteer programs as part of the strategy to address critical business issues.
- ❑ more than half of the participants acknowledged the linkage between such volunteer programs and profitability. Even more agreed that employee service built morale, teamwork and productivity.

The latest such study, a 1997 poll by the Boston College Center for Corporate Community Relations, noted that the most significant new trend is an increase in the number of corporations now allocating resources to global corporate citizenship. More than four out of ten companies with multinational operations have an established community relations program at their international sites. Another development, on the domestic front, is the increased support for community relations by senior management. These days, the most critical issues for the business community are education, health care, job training, economic development, crime, the environment, literacy, substance abuse and child care.

SOME EXEMPLARY EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

Current surveys and research involving the Fortune 500 companies — the preeminent firms in the United States — reveal an exponentially increasing number of employee volunteer programs. The largest arena of corporate involvement, by far, is education. But employee volunteerism is a major factor in the areas of health, human services,

economic development, the arts and the environment. For example:

❑ Allstate Insurance Nationwide focuses specifically on urban issues. It teams up on neighborhood revitalization projects, advises low income homeowners on creative financing plans, and provides help when disaster relief is needed.

❑ Adolph Coors Company, the beverage manufacturer, is providing leadership training for students from predominantly African-American colleges.

❑ Lucent Technologies' volunteer wing sponsors an annual "global day of caring" involving 10,000 employees and retirees in community projects in 25 U.S. states and 17 other countries.

❑ Honeywell, Inc., in partnership with the Atlanta-based Habitat for Humanity, has brought 4,000 employee and retiree volunteers together to build affordable housing around the world.

❑ Target, a merchandise firm, has "good neighbor" teams that select local schools worthy of support and then sign a one-year contract to assist them as needed.

❑ Hewlett-Packard, the electronics firm, has created an e-mail mentoring program that matches employees with students in grades five through 12. All communication between students and volunteers is conducted via electronic mail.

❑ Home Depot, the nationwide supplier of building materials and a variety of household equipment, works with Habitat for Humanity in 60 locations around the United States and Canada to construct homes for low-income individuals — by donating funds, housing supplies, expertise and the service of skilled employees.

❑ Transmedia Network, a dining discount card company, involves older children in a mentoring program to encourage younger children to read.

❑ Merck and Eli Lilly, the pharmaceutical firms, lend executives to nonprofit organizations for periods of time for volunteer work.

THE BENEFITS OF EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING

Corporate volunteering is responding to a society in need of increasing service, to businesses seeking increasingly competent and committed employees, and to individuals in need of opportunities for growth and interaction. It is not surprising, therefore, that these activities have such great potential impact.

The benefits to the community are threefold. First, such programs have brought new talents, skill and energy to various locales, especially in management and technology. Second, they have provided groups of volunteer workers for "done-in-a-day" types of vital assistance — coastal cleanups and aid on special events, for instance. Third, they have brought corporations and the community together as partners in improving the way of life for all residents.

As for the benefits to the corporations, the picture is much clearer following considerable research and study — particularly in the 1990s. Volunteer programs can propel the strategic goals of the company (good corporate citizenship, for example) forward, and thus are seen as integral, not peripheral elements. These projects can and do build public credibility for the corporation, and increase name recognition. Furthermore, they are beneficial in attracting new talent to the firm, motivating staff members, and enhancing professional development for both junior and senior managers.

General Mills (food manufacturer) and FedEx (worldwide private mail delivery system) found that their community service programs strengthened employee skills in leadership, teamwork, organization and decision-making. The Intel Corporation (computer technology) found their employee volunteers more skilled in communication, time management, negotiation, budgeting and allocation. In addition, Intel studies noted an increased understanding of, and respect for, diversity, and affirmation of personal capability for growth.

The employees themselves derive considerable benefits as well. Through their volunteering, they have developed new business contacts, gained experience in strategic planning, become involved with community leaders, and learned how to interact with unfamiliar constituencies. There is a decided link, too, between physical and mental health and participation in volunteer activities.

But as the workplace and the workforce evolves, as it invariably has over the decades, some challenges remain for corporations and their employees in their interaction with communities.

Internal management issues — downsizing and mergers — are one category. As it turns out,

employee volunteer programs often have been the glue to hold companies and people together in times of management crisis — becoming a point of pride, renewal and team development. Timberland, the shoe and clothing manufacturer, and the IBM Corporation are examples of firms whose volunteer projects have been institutional anchors.

The changing nature of the workforce from long-term, secure and loyal employees to more mobile ones has challenged and changed the nature and structure of some volunteer programs. In most cases, though, these activities have afforded the means for new workers to get to know their veteran counterparts, thus creating, rapidly, a desired sense of community identity within the corporation.

With national boundaries blurring and increased globalization taking place in the corporate world, corporate citizenship programs and other innovative international social initiatives are finding a welcome place as new parameters for competition.

Although, in the past, there has been only limited evidence documenting the strategic value of corporate citizen programs, the picture is brightening. One major effort, *Measuring the Value of Corporate Citizenship*, was published by the Council on Foundations in 1994. Today, the business environment demands that every

department and function measure its results, and this is happening. The Points of Light Foundation and Boston College's Center of Corporate Community Relations have joined in a two-year effort to develop program assessment tools and processes that corporate managers can use to determine, quantitatively and qualitatively, the return on investment in employee volunteer programs. Another benchmarking study by the Boston College Center and the American Productivity and Quality Center aims at determining the optimal practices in corporate community relations programs throughout the nation.

"For the first time," Craig Smith, president of Corporate Citizen (a think tank based in Seattle, Washington), observed recently in the *Harvard Business Review*, "businesses are backing philanthropic initiatives with real corporate muscle." That muscle includes, most significantly, legions of employee volunteers. In their activities outside the workplace and the workday, they are finding new worth, and gaining new strength and satisfaction. ■

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SCHOOLS, UNIVERSITIES & VOLUNTEERING

BY TERRY PICKERAL

Jonathan tests the quality of water in a stream in northwest Washington, D.C., as part of an eighth-grade service-learning project. To prepare for this activity, Jonathan studied basic principles of biology and the ecology of wetlands in his science class. In his language arts class, he wrote a research paper on how watersheds affect community health. In his social science class, he joined with a group of fellow students to examine successful strategies local citizens employ to enhance local streams.

Juanita, a sophomore at a major university, volunteers four hours a week in a homeless shelter. Introduced to the shelter and its services through a sociology course, Juanita learned about the diverse causes of homelessness, and was amazed at the number of children that had no place to call home. After completing a research assignment on homelessness and children, and sharing her findings with a community coalition, she signed up to tutor children in a school for students from homeless families.

The educational system in the United States today affords students like Jonathan and Juanita the opportunity to become engaged in community service that is linked to their course work. As a result, young people are developing an ethic of service and citizenship as they move through their academic routine. But this is nothing new: U.S. public education, in fact, was founded on the principle of educating youth for citizenship. And this principle prevails across the educational landscape.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION

Traditionally, schools engage students in community service. Food drives, environmental projects, community gardening, aid to the elderly and tutoring programs are among the common activities.

The state of Maryland, in fact, has made community service a requirement for secondary school graduation. All students in the state's public school system must complete 75 hours of service between the sixth and 12th grades. Many private schools have followed suit.

Jonathan's experience described above is known as service learning — coordinating carefully organized service experiences with the academic curriculum. According to the Corporation for National Service (CNS), a U.S. government agency that established service-learning as part of the Corporation's mandate, this method "enhances what is taught in schools by extending learning beyond the classroom...[and by helping to]...foster the development of a sense of caring for others."

Service learning is a function of several converging initiatives, interests and research in education reform, among them new emphases on measurable performance and training in character and citizenship. State and national organizations have begun encouraging and supporting service and service learning, and teachers are being trained in this area.

CNS statistics disclosed recently that more than three-quarters of a million primary and secondary school students are involved in some form of community service. Each student participating in service learning in 1997 contributed, on the average, more than 15 hours of service that was linked to courses and programs of study.

A variety of research studies have concluded that service learning has a decidedly positive impact on



students. They demonstrate that this phenomenon leads to improved academic performance, gains in knowledge of the service provided, growth in higher order thinking, expanded social and civic responsibility, increased acceptance of cultural diversity, and enhanced self-esteem. Ultimately, it is engagement, not mere exposure, that counts.

Shelley Berman, superintendent of the Hudson (Massachusetts) Public Schools and chairperson of the Compact for Learning and Citizenship, explained recently how service learning was integrated into the Hudson school system, involving 80 percent of the collective student body during the 1996-97 academic year.

"We are creating a consistent, system-wide approach so that an ethic of service and an ethic of care is sustained from kindergarten to high school graduation," Berman noted.

"Teachers at each grade level develop their own initiatives. Kindergarteners are taking part this year in a handicap awareness program that is raising funds for the March of Dimes [a national organization supporting polio research], a student-run recycling program tied to the environmental studies science unit, and a holiday toy drive linked to the social studies unit on community."

Berman observes that true service learning "helps students make the connections between what they are studying in class and real-world issues. It engages students in action and reflection...and it requires educators to think of students not as future citizens but as active members of their community."

VOLUNTEERS IN SCHOOLS

Across the United States, community fraternal, civic and service organizations have focused many of their voluntary efforts on schools. In addition, there are national initiatives (such as America Reads) that place volunteers in schools to increase student academic achievement.

To assist volunteers and to make their gestures as beneficial as possible, the American Association of School Administrators is currently working to identify the "essential elements" for effective volunteering in school systems. This follows a study, in the early 1990s, that investigated three areas in which volunteers would be, potentially, most effective: in actual instruction; in improving classroom behavior and attendance; and in positively affecting teaching methods and even public attitudes towards education.

Volunteers in schools re-engage the public in education, contribute new ideas to address school improvement, create a broader sense of community support, and improve school-community relations.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Colleges and universities in the United States have a healthy tradition of student volunteering, from *ad hoc* emergency services to long-term commitments. Student organizations, honor societies, fraternities and sororities, residence units and other campus groups encourage or require young men and women to return something to the community in which the school is situated.

In 1985, a small group of college and university presidents formed the national Campus Compact, an association committed to campus-based service and service learning. Today, this group, with about 600 members, convenes colloquia and national and state faculty development institutes to encourage and support community involvement and service learning. Campus Compact also initiates projects that address specific service activities — such as mentoring, or developing campus-community collaborations — and produces and distributes resource materials.

The 1997-98 statistics for students at Campus Compact schools are impressive. For example:

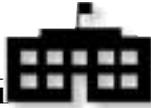
- ❑ Undergraduate students contributed 29 million hours of service.

- ❑ 284,000 undergraduates participated in ongoing community service activities, and 316,000 were involved in one-event projects.

- ❑ Nearly 11,000 faculty members were active in service learning, and nearly 12,000 service-learning courses were available to undergraduates.

The parallel to this organization of presidents is the Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL), linking college students engaged in service projects. COOL, founded in 1984, is devoted to educating, empowering and mobilizing men and women on campus with respect to community service — to increase participation and to promote unflagging activism. COOL achieves its goals, typically, through a national conference featuring workshops and networking sessions, publications, regional programs and a leadership program to train and maintain campus coordinators.

The success and sustained interest in service learning on college campuses is directly related to



the institutions' missions, to the role assumed by faculty members, to effective teaching and learning, and to the priorities the institutions have established. A mission might cite a citizenship quotient. Faculty members are encouraged by a sense of responsibility and possible rewards — including promotion and tenure. The more that service learning is aligned with institutional priorities, the more likely it will be embraced by students, faculty and staff.

THE FUTURE

Over the past five years, there have been encouraging signs regarding the value and expanded role of service and service learning on college campuses. Given this growth, it is not difficult to see:

- service learning linked more closely to the way teachers teach and students learn.
- more schools training current and future faculty members in the pedagogy of service learning.
- more institutions struggling with the conflict between establishing service as a value and requiring it for graduation.
- more average citizens engaged in school activities by volunteering.

Schools must change. They must move from merely exposing students to processes and knowledge to engaging them in activities that create and foster knowledge. Communities must assist schools to meet their objectives, rather than merely standing by as critics. And students must develop

— while they're still young — an ethic of lifelong service and citizenship. As they do so, they may find themselves making career choices based on their service experiences.

If schools and colleges engage citizens and communities as essential partners in education, service and service learning will become a powerful catalyst for school and community improvement. In that sense, the challenges are not ones of initiating, but rather continuing and enhancing a movement. ■

Terry Pickeral is president of Cascade Educational Consultants, a service-learning consortium in Bellingham, Washington. He is a senior consultant to the Education Commission of the States, a nonprofit organization that provides educational policy information to state legislators. He is also a national fellow with the Corporation for National Service.

SHARED LOVE OF READING PAIRS LEGISLATORS

& STUDENTS

BY KATHLEEN KENNEDY MANZO
FROM *EDUCATION WEEK*

After a morning spent casting a key vote in the U.S. Senate Finance Committee, leading confirmation hearings for a candidate for a major government post and posing questions at a hearing on tobacco legislation, U.S. Senator James M. Jeffords rushes to his “power lunch” a few blocks from the Capitol.

But he’s not headed to a posh Washington, D.C., restaurant to meet with lobbyists or formidable constituents. Instead, he hurries off to spend an hour in the library of a nearby primary school, where he’ll be deep in discussion with a 10-year-old girl as they share a school lunch and their love of reading.

Jeffords and his young friend, Sherryl Grant, a fourth-grader at Robert Brent Elementary School, meet every week — same time, same place. They read books and talk about school, and about Sherryl’s plans for the future. It is one of the most important engagements on his busy calendar, Jeffords says.

“It was very difficult getting here today,” he conceded, in light of everything else that was on his schedule. “But this hour is very relaxing for me. This is the most rewarding.”

Some 440 congressional staff members and about a dozen senators spend an hour each week with students in the District of Columbia schools as part of a program called Everybody Wins. The senators

visit with 180 children at Brent Elementary who participate in Everybody Wins. Total enrollment at the school is 220. The other volunteers fan out to nine other public schools across Washington.

Now in its third year in the Washington school system, Everybody Wins pairs U.S. government workers and business professionals with students for mentoring and to give the children a chance to read aloud. It also trains parents to reinforce the importance of reading at home.

Jeffords chairs the Labor and Human Resources Committee of the U.S. Senate, which oversees education. He launched the Washington program after hearing about its success in New York City. A textile executive named Arthur Tannenbaum initiated Everybody Wins after becoming aware of, and concerned about, a decline in the reading performances of public school students across New York City. Tannenbaum approached the principal of a primary school near his office, and asked if he and a few colleagues might spend time reading with the children. He chose the lunch hour, the best time for business people to leave the office, because it did not require children to be removed from the classroom.

Tannenbaum’s program has grown to 2,000 volunteers in more than two dozen New York City schools. Both there and in Washington, local business participants help pay for the program’s staff, including a salaried coordinator for each school.

The volunteers come religiously. Everybody Wins requires reading partners to commit to a full school year of weekly visits with their assigned pupils. Many volunteers share a student with a colleague or staff member to make sure that someone is on hand every week.

While Jeffords was getting together with Sherryl Grant, Senator Edward M. Kennedy was helping his reading partner, second-grader Jasmine Harrison, carefully chart the books she has read this year. He recalled proudly the number of new words each title has challenged Jasmine to learn, and boasts of her knack for remembering words after seeing them just once.

"I get more out of reading with Jasmine than she does," Kennedy said. "I am here every Tuesday. It's a must."

Kennedy's commitment inspired freshman Senator Mary L. Landrieu to get involved as well. The time she spends in the school has brought new

perspective to her work and to its impact beyond Capitol Hill, she said.

"I just didn't think I could do it more than once a month," Landrieu explained. She'd tapped a staff member to read with her partner, Kishell Alexander, on the other occasions. "But now," Landrieu continued, "I would not miss this hour for all the money in Washington. With some things you do on the Hill [as a legislator], you never see the result. But I can come here and see Kishell, and see her progress weekly."

First-grader Kishell was shy when she was asked to talk about herself and about why she enjoys reading. She covered her mouth with her hand and fixed an embarrassed grin on the questioner. But then she began reading to Landrieu, and quickly exuded excitement and confidence. ■

Kathleen Kennedy Manzo is a staff writer of Education Week. This article is abridged and reprinted with permission from Education Week, vol. 17, no. 24, March 4, 1998.

VOLUNTEERISM & RELIGION:

A U.S. MIDWESTERN PERSPECTIVE

BY PAULA BEUGEN AND JAY TCATH

“We learned a lot about the neighborhood.”

This was the impression of a young adult volunteer who participated in several Rebuild The City projects on the East Side of St. Paul, Minnesota, over the past 18 months, as part of the religious community’s involvement in housing and community revitalization activities in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

The volunteer, part of a synagogue group, worked alongside Christians and Muslims — building retaining walls and rehabilitating and painting homes. Individuals from the neighborhoods and members of the U.S. national service program AmeriCorps were partners in the task.

These particular projects were organized through a partnership of several groups — faith-specific, interfaith and community organizations. In microcosm, the partnership mirrors the involvement of the religious sector in Minnesota not only to what is happening in the midwestern United States, but also nationally, and often globally.

The faith community represents a substantial part of the U.S. volunteer corps. According to a 1996 study, *Giving and Volunteering in the United States*, based on a national survey, 55 percent of members of religious congregations volunteer. Only 34 percent of those religiously unaffiliated participate in some such individual activity. The correlation is even more telling when considering the fact that nearly 60 percent of those who were active in religious organizations during their youth have participated in volunteer work, while about 37 percent of those who were religiously inactive chose to offer their services.

In 1996, The McKnight Foundation, a Minneapolis-based private grant-making organization, launched an interfaith initiative of Christians, Jews and Muslims called Congregations in Community (CIC). The premise is that faith-based groups are sources of large numbers of potential volunteers who are motivated to help and inspired to action by Scriptural mandates. CIC plans to enlist 7,000 volunteers in the Twin Cities by 1999 in an initiative to strengthen families and neighborhoods. Its partners in this effort

include the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches, Masjid An-Nur Islamic Centers of Minneapolis and St. Paul, the St. Paul Area Council of Churches, the TURN Leadership Foundation (a local Christian organization that develops leaders across racial and cultural lines) and the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas.

In 1997, CIC sponsored an interfaith conference called Faith Communities in Service: Responses to Welfare Reform. At the meeting, a religious leader from the Basilica of St. Mary introduced the Jeremiah Program — a collaboration of businesses, congregations, educational institutions, and governmental and grass-roots agencies that promote self-sufficiency for mothers and children. Taking as its mandate the Biblical prophet Jeremiah’s teaching, “Seek the well-being of the city,” the Jeremiah Program assists low-income parents in completing their education and achieving economic independence. It also provides access to affordable housing, child care, health care, support services and meaningful employment. As a representative of Masjid An-Nur mosque emphasized to conference participants, “when somebody comes to our door or to our congregation and says, ‘I need help,’ we have to be very, very creative in the ways we figure out what we can do. We need to see ourselves as people who will make a difference.”

Historically, the religious community within the United States has been instrumental in social movements on behalf of civil rights, children’s rights and peace. Today, these movements are taking new and expanded courses. For instance, America’s Promise — the organization that emanated from the historic Presidents’ Summit for America’s Future in 1997 in Philadelphia — focuses on providing the nation’s youth with five resources: a healthy start, mentors, marketable skills, safe places and opportunities to serve. All of these afford congregations an avenue for involvement.

Uniting Congregations for Youth Development, a project developed by Search Institute — a nonprofit research organization dedicated to the development and well-being of young people — is one model of service. It focuses on building the assets of

congregations so they in turn can develop assets that youth within the religious and secular communities need in order to succeed. Another model incorporates service-learning opportunities that make it possible for youth and adults to learn through their community activities. Participants have the opportunity to think about, discuss and demonstrate what they have learned through their volunteer experiences.

Faith-based volunteering takes many forms. Externally, outside the church, synagogue or mosque, it can include “hands-on” housing and community revitalization, food programs, disaster relief, tutoring, child care, mentoring or job training. Within the faith community, volunteer activities range from building maintenance, religious instruction and holiday preparation to welcoming newcomers, developing and leading youth programs, assisting members who are frail or elderly, and visiting the sick. In addition, almost without exception, lay leadership roles in congregations and faith-based organizations are volunteer posts.

Often, congregations link up with groups from other sectors of the community — faith-based or not, as the case may be — to form broader-based partnerships. The Jeremiah Program described above is an example of this multi-sector arrangement. The most convincing evidence that a true partnership has been established is when all parties rise above their distinctive organizational goals to achieve a collective vision, based on shared values. One example of this might be the endless number of “in-kind” resource mobilizations that are initiated — book and school-supply campaigns, donations of personal hygiene items for shelter residents, food bank projects and adopt-a-room programs for nurseries housing children in crisis.

For more than a quarter-century, a diverse, vibrant contingent of interfaith organizations have linked Minnesota’s Jews, Protestants and Catholics, serving the state’s needy, regardless of particular religion. Muslims, increasingly, are becoming involved in these groups. From direct service to advocacy, from fundraising to educational projects, a veritable supermarket of service choices is in place to spark the interests of volunteers, responding to the needs of the hungry, homeless and otherwise disadvantaged.

What is happening in Minnesota occurs elsewhere, in various forms, as well. Here, though, are some brief examples of the types of organizations flourishing in the Twin Cities, engaging vast numbers annually:

□ Metro Paint-A-Thon. Since 1984, over one weekend each August, thousands of volunteers are

mobilized to scrape, prime and paint the homes of low-income senior citizens and people with disabilities. Christian volunteers, as a rule, work on Saturday, and Jewish volunteers participate on Sunday — allowing each group to observe its own Sabbath. On the second weekend of August 1998, 8,000 volunteers from 72 congregations, 91 corporations and 39 civic associations painted some 250 homes. Corporations donated all supplies — thousands of gallons of paint, brushes, ladders and other materials.

□ Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAH). This regional advocacy, education and service organization linking more than 100 Catholic, Jewish and Protestant congregations and groups works to ensure decent, safe and affordable housing throughout Minneapolis and St. Paul. MICAH recently formed a Family Shelter Network that provides more than 3,500 bed nights of shelter, and created the Homeless Family Support Program that offers rental assistance to homeless families.

□ Minnesota FoodShare. Formed by Catholics, Protestants and Jews in 1982, this group ensures that the state’s citizens will have a healthy supply of nutritious food. In 1997, the 250 local food shelves comprising the FoodShare network distributed more than 24 million pounds of food to more than a quarter-million people — over half of whom were children. That same year, the group launched its first “Eat Breakfast Campaign” — hosting nutrition fairs for 3,000 students at seven elementary schools, to emphasize how a good breakfast each morning can provide the stamina so vital to achieving good grades.

□ Nechama (the Hebrew word meaning “comfort”). The brainchild of a Jewish volunteer who went from Minneapolis to Des Moines, Iowa, in 1993 to help with flood relief, this organization mobilized some 400 Jewish and Christian volunteers during the 1997 and 1998 floods, tornadoes and heavy storms that ravaged the upper midwestern United States. Nechama’s volunteers traveled more than 1,000 miles on two dozen deployments (sandbagging operations, for instance) to help families and communities defend themselves and their properties against impending disasters recover from natural disaster. Nechama also raised more than \$50,000 to rebuild a synagogue in flood-torn Grand Forks, North Dakota, and to assist other flood relief efforts in the region. Nechama is a project of the Twin Cities’ Jewish Community Relations Council, and works closely with the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army.

□ Joint Religious Legislative Coalition. Since 1971, the JRLC has enabled the Jewish, Catholic and Protestant communities to have a voice on social justice legislation before the Minnesota State Legislature. On issues ranging from hate crimes to the death penalty, from services for immigrants to campaign finance reform, the JRLC has been in the front lines of research, grass-roots activism and advocacy. Under the group's unique arrangement, all three faith sponsors must agree on any position to be taken on any proposed legislation. If any faith group dissents, the JRLC will not address the issue. After 27 legislative sessions and a host of prospectively contentious matters, no faith group has invoked its veto authority. (In 1996, the JRLC extended observer status to the Minnesota chapter of the American Muslim Council.)

There are countless untold stories of religious community volunteers acting for the common good. It emerges, quite simply, from tradition, belief and practice. The scope and scale of these activities are immeasurable. Suffice it to say that on a daily basis, at an expanding rate, people of faith act upon their values individually and collectively to make the country, and the world, a better place in which to live and to raise a new generation of citizens. ■

Paula Beugen is director of Avodah B'Yachad — Service Together, a component of Congregations in Community, an interfaith action initiative sponsored by The McKnight Foundation. Jay Tcath is executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas.

U.S. VOLUNTEERISM ON THE GLOBAL SCENE

BY SUSAN J. ELLIS

As the century draws to a close, there are numerous indications that volunteerism is expanding around the world. Each year, the Association for Volunteer Administration and the Points of Light Foundation see the number of international registrants at conferences grow. Recently, the International Association for Volunteer Effort held its biennial World Volunteer Conference in Edmonton, Canada, and attracted 2,700 volunteer leaders from 92 countries.

Volunteering is not a uniquely American phenomenon. True, the United States has a voluntary sector with more structure and impact than do other countries. But every country has developed ways in which people help people. By learning what other countries do by volunteer action, we can examine our own beliefs and get new ideas. Certainly we in the United States have made enormous advances in developing the *profession* of working with volunteers — training, publishing, professional associations — and we should share this information. In addition, though, there is the issue of what we can learn from each other.

Over the years, I've come across some intriguing examples of volunteer activity in other countries. For example:

- ❑ In Japan, probation officers spend time coordinating volunteers who, in turn, are the ones working with offenders.
- ❑ Volunteers maintain some of Ecuador's largest cemeteries.
- ❑ In Israel, volunteers work with the military to offer bereavement support to families who lose loved ones in armed conflict.
- ❑ In Spain, volunteers provide medical services in prisons.

Leaders of volunteers around the globe are making conscious efforts to connect with one another. The increased numbers of conferences and publications

in the field of volunteerism reflect this broadened perspective, and occasionally initiate new contacts. The United Nations has declared the year 2001 as "the International Year of the Volunteer."

The Internet has given us the world on a keyboard, and the impact on volunteerism has been significant. We have only just begun to explore the communication possibilities. For instance, two Greek registrants at the recent Edmonton conference happened to have learned about the meeting through my own company's website, www.energizeinc.com, which they came across while blithely cruising the "net." The power of the Internet is such that, at absolutely no additional cost — only a bit of time and attention — "passive" notices such as the announcement of the conference on my site can take on lives of their own. Why shouldn't someone from Sweden hop over to England for a seminar? Why wouldn't someone from Boston fly to Chicago for a meaningful conference? Even local or regional events are capable of attracting unanticipated attention.

The potential is limitless. Indeed, many causes in which volunteers are active have no geographic boundaries — such as the battle against AIDS. Environmental issues affect the entire planet. Hunger and famine require international solutions. In all of the campaigns to confront these problems, volunteers are always private citizens — unfettered by laws, treaties, diplomacy or red tape. Concerned individuals can simply pack a passport and cross all sorts of geographic and psychological borders. And thanks to the Internet, such direct person-to-person exchanges should increase. ■

VOICES *of* VOLUNTEERS

Few can describe the impact of volunteering more insightfully than the volunteers themselves. Here is a selection of some of the “voices” from across the United States reflecting that experience.

Volunteerism to me is a way to build community. The world often seems too big, the problems too weighty for any one person to have any impact. As a volunteer with Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity, I saw how much one person can do. Best of all, we get to impact not faceless strangers, but families — families we can get to know and work with side by side.

* Joan Palmquist, Minneapolis, Minnesota

It's a major priority for the church that volunteer ministry should be open to everybody who worships at the Basilica. We try to structure volunteer ministry to give parishioners a real sense of ownership. The church is more than theology, liturgy, or bricks and mortar. In the end, the church is the people. And as people become involved, we all grow stronger.

* Lisa Shaughnessy, director of volunteer ministry, Basilica of St. Mary, Minneapolis, Minnesota

After working for the federal [U.S.] government for nearly 40 years, I retired in 1994. The very next day, I returned to work for the NRCS as a volunteer.

Hardly a day passes that someone — family member, employee or friend — does not ask me, ‘Why are you doing it?’ My answer is that I like the work. I enjoy the people with whom I work. I believe in what I am doing and I feel that I am making a difference. Also, after being a federal employee for many years, I am now giving something back.

* June J. Hogg, regional volunteer coordinator, NRCS, Richmond, Virginia

I've always worked with very, very small things that you need a microscope to see. I wanted to build something you could see from a block away.

* Burt Keel, former micro-chip engineer, now a volunteer with Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity, Minneapolis, Minnesota

The following individuals volunteer their time and talents through their corporate employers:

People often ask me, what do you get out of volunteering? I tell them it's not what I get but what I become. I'm transformed by it. I've seen this transformation not only in me, but over and over again in the lives of others who volunteer and give back to their communities. Volunteering enriches and strengthens families. What better way to unite your family than to volunteer together for some community activity? I have also learned so much from being involved. I've become more organized and efficient and have learned how to create a team.

* Susan Kohn, banker, Bank of America, Reading, California, and Team America Volunteer of the Year 1997

Many employees tell me they are proud to work for a company that supports a corporate volunteer program so emphatically. I am constantly exhilarated by the energy and commitment of our volunteers, and the responses we get from the people whose lives we touch — a smile from an elderly person who would have been lonely without us, or from the Special Olympics [a competition for the physically or mentally challenged] athlete so thrilled that we're there.

* Carol Reiser, community affairs director, Rich's/Lazarus/Goldsmith's, Federated Department Stores, Inc., Cincinnati, Ohio

I like being involved with performances that involve the community. The more we can teach children and the community at large to appreciate art, the better off our communities will be. I don't want to work for some company that doesn't think it has an obligation to make my community a better place to live.

* Alexa Beutler, human resources manager, Time Warner Cable, Nebraska Division

As a "techie," I find volunteering immensely rewarding. I am working with my local school district to develop an action plan to integrate technology into the daily curriculum. By my guiding teachers, our kids will leave school with an adequate grounding in what is becoming more complex and powerful technology.

* Steve Cropper, managing director, SITE-Infrastructure Projects, Charles Schwab and Co., Inc.

Last year, we organized "Helping Hands Day." Five hundred employees and their families got together to pack boxes with food and toys. It was truly gratifying to see our children get a hands-on experience of giving back to others less fortunate. Of the people served by this food, 30 percent are seniors who must choose between spending their meager income on food, rent or medicine. By mounting one of the largest corporate food drives in the United States, we're doing our part to make such difficult choices unnecessary.

* Donna Hayden, supervisor, Applied Materials' Worldwide Manufacturing Operations Logistics, Santa Clara, California ■

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SELECTED INTERNET RESOURCES

Please note that USIS assumes no responsibility for the content and availability of the Internet sources listed below.

20 Ways for Teenagers to Help Other People by Volunteering
(<http://www.bygpub.com/books/tg2rw/volunteer.htm>)
An online resource for the book *The Teenager's Guide to the Real World*, by Marshall Brain (Raleigh, NC: BYG Publications, 1997). The site describes 20 volunteer opportunities for teens as well as links to several nonprofit organizations.

America Reads Challenge
(<http://www.ed.gov/inits/americanreads/>)

The U. S. Department of Education created this site supporting President Bill Clinton's challenge to the nation "to ensure that every child can read well and independently by the end of the third grade." It includes information about training opportunities, questions and answers, legislation, the President's Coalition for the America Reads Challenge, federal work-study, publications and research.

America's Promise: The Alliance for Youth
(<http://www.americaspromise.org/>)
Founded at the Presidents' Summit for America's Future, America's Promise, an alliance of corporations, foundations and other organizations from the private and public sectors, aims to create access for every at-risk child in America to the resources needed in order for them to lead happy, healthy and productive lives.

Association for Volunteer Administration
(<http://www.avaintl.org>)
An international membership organization whose purpose is to "promote professionalism and strengthen leadership in volunteerism." Offers a professional credentialing program, publishes a quarterly journal, *The Journal of Volunteer Administration*, and sponsors international conferences.

Boston College Center for Corporate Community Relations
(http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/csom/cccr/)
An international corporate membership organization, partnering with businesses worldwide to strengthen community relationships and foster healthy, sustainable communities for citizens and businesses alike. The site includes resource material for management and professional development, including certificate programs in corporate community relations. The Center's third annual "snapshot of issues and trends in community relations" (http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/csom/cccr/97CR_Index.html) surveys the growth of global corporate citizenship.

COOL: Campus Outreach Opportunity League
(<http://www.cool2serve.org/>)

A national nonprofit organization dedicated to the education and empowerment of college and university students to strengthen the United States through community service. COOL mobilizes and links students of all backgrounds so as to increase participation in communities, and fosters the civic and social responsibility necessary to build a just society.

Campus Compact
(<http://www.compact.org/>)

A coalition of college and university presidents committed to making service a central element of undergraduate education, integrated with academic study and infused throughout all areas of the institutions these presidents head.

“Community Service” (*Education Week* issues page)
(<http://www.edweek.org/context/topics/civics.htm>)
Service learning “combines mandatory community service with related classroom activities” to promote learning the basics about democracy and leadership. This issues page includes a glossary, links and relevant articles from *Education Week* and other publications.

Compact for Learning and Citizenship
(<http://www.az.com/~pickeral/LearnCitizen.html>)
Housed at the Education Commission of the States, the Compact for Learning and Citizenship is an organization of state chiefs and district superintendents. The organization works to “provide the educational leadership necessary to integrate community service learning into the program of study for all youth enrolled in grades kindergarten through twelve.”

Congregations in Community - McKnight Foundation
(<http://www.mckfdn.org/cic.htm>)

An initiative of the McKnight Foundation as an interfaith effort to recruit and train volunteers to assist low-income people. Its goals are to further the reach of religious organizations to serve children and families, and to bring people of different faiths together to address common community problems.

Corporation for National Service
(<http://www.cns.gov>)

This site links to all the organizations under the CNS umbrella: AmeriCorps, Learn & Serve America, the Senior Corps, America Reads, and National Service Scholarships. Numerous service resources, such as notices of funding opportunities, internships available, networking guides, clearinghouses and documents are highlighted as well.

CyberVPM (Cyberspace Volunteer Program Manager)
(<http://www.cybervpm.com>)

This site serves as a broad look at volunteers and volunteer management. The CyberVPM.com “Resources for Volunteer Program Managers” serves as a “starting point for information on and instruction in volunteer program management.” This “web book” includes articles and links on issues from developing volunteer programs to recruiting, screening, training and recognizing volunteers, to legal issues and more. An online bookstore, training kits and a vibrant discussion group are other elements of this site.

Energize, Inc.
(<http://www.energizeinc.com>)

A variety of resources are included on this site including a library of articles and bibliography (<http://www.energizeinc.com/art/biblio.html>) on volunteer management, an online Bookstore, quotes and parables on volunteerism, hot topics, a calendar of conferences, a job bank and more. Also lists state, local and provincial associations of volunteer administration.

Habitat for Humanity International
(<http://www.habitat.org/>)

Habitat for Humanity has built over 65,000 houses in partnership with people in need throughout the world. This page will answer your questions on how to get involved, where the houses are built and how the program works. Fact sheets describing Habitat’s progress are available for each country in which Habitat is working.

IdeaList

(<http://www.idealists.org>)

This site from Action Without Borders lists 14,000 nonprofit organizations from 125 countries. Each entry provides information about their services, volunteer opportunities, job openings, internships, upcoming events and publications. The directory is searchable, and the site provides numerous links.

Impact Online Virtual Volunteering Project

(<http://www.impactonline.org/vv>)

This "virtual volunteering" project was launched by the nonprofit, Impact Online (<http://www.impactonline.org/>), which is a "matching service" for volunteers and the organizations that need them. The project looks at volunteer activities that can be completed off-site via the Internet. The web site includes a number of practical guidelines, resources and examples of noteworthy activities.

Independent Sector (IS)

(<http://www.indepsec.org/>)

IS describes itself as a "national leadership forum, working to encourage philanthropy, volunteering, not-for-profit initiative and citizen action." Publishes numerous highly useful surveys, toolkits and monographs on government relations, leadership, management and research in the nonprofit field.

International Association for Voluntary Effort (IAVE)

(<http://www.unv.org/projects/iyv2001/iave.html>)

Created in 1970 by a small group of women throughout the world "who shared a common vision of how volunteers can contribute to the solution of human and social problems." With a board of directors from 19 countries, the organization continues to promote and support effective volunteering internationally through its conferences, volunteer centers, membership services and training programs in education, public awareness and youth involvement.

International Year of Volunteers, 2001

(<http://www.unv.org/projects/iyv2001/index.html>)

During the 52nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly on November 20, 1997, a proposal was approved to proclaim the year 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers. Continual updates on IYV 2001 can be accessed through this page.

Internet Nonprofit Center

(<http://www.nonprofits.org/>)

Provides information on non-profit organizations, wise giving practices, and other issues of concern to volunteers and donors. A Bibliography of Books on Volunteerism (<http://www.nonprofits.org/library/bib3.html>) is also available.

Internet Sites for the Nonprofit Sector

(<http://www.usia.gov/journals/itdhr/0198/ijde/websites.htm>)

This list was prepared by the United States Information Agency's Democracy and Human Rights team for the electronic journal "The Nonprofit Sector: Partner in Civil Society," *Issues of Democracy*, January 1998.

Kids Can Make a Difference (KIDS)

(<http://www.kids.maine.org>)

KIDS is an educational program for middle- and high-school-age students, which focuses on the "root causes of hunger and poverty, the people most affected, solutions and how students can help." The Web page offers access to a teacher's guide, a hunger quiz, a KIDS newsletter and more.

Literature of the Nonprofit Sector Online

(<http://fdncenter.org/lmps/>)

From the Foundation Center (<http://fdncenter.org>), this authoritative bibliography is regularly updated and contains citations to materials collected by the Center's five libraries as well as selected literature from other sources. New acquisitions on voluntarism is available

(<http://fdncenter.org/onlib/biblio/voluntar.html>).

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse
(<http://www.nicsl.coled.umn.edu/>)

This clearinghouse maintained by Learn & Serve America, collects and disseminates information for the service-learning field. Among the resources available are searchable databases of Contacts, Events, a ListServ, Literature and Program Information; downloadable bibliographies, monographs, newsletters and videos; publications for purchase; and extensive service learning links.

National Service-Learning in Teacher Education Partnership

(<http://www.az.com/~pickeral/partnership.html>)
Includes bibliographies of service-learning and teacher education resources. A listserv for integrating service learning in teacher preparation is available.

Nonprofit Gateway

<http://www.nonprofit.gov/>
Links to information on government grants, budgets, volunteer opportunities and agency partnerships.

Points of Light Foundation

(<http://www.pointsoflight.org/>)
Along with the Corporation for National Service, the Points of Light Foundation co-sponsored the Presidents' Summit for America's Future. Devoted to promoting volunteerism, the nonprofit organization has developed a number of ongoing training and development programs and initiatives, such as Connect America (<http://www.pointsoflight.org/connectamerica/connectamerica.html>), the Prudential Youth Leadership Institute, the JC Penney Golden Rule Awards Program, the Daily Points of Light awards and the annual "National Volunteer Week." Note the section on corporate volunteer initiatives (http://www.pointsoflight.org/assistance/assistance_corporate.html).

Presidents' Summit for America's Future

(<http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/New/Summit/index.html>): includes Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and speeches

On April 27-29, 1997, in Independence Hall in Philadelphia, President Clinton and President Bush convened the first Presidents' Summit for America's Future. The Summit's goal, like that of AmeriCorps, was to "mobilize America's citizen power into a united effort to solve our common problems — especially those that threaten our young people." Participants included leaders from prominent corporations and service organizations as well as every living former President. Look here for transcripts of speeches and FAQ about the Summit. For follow-up information, see America's Promise: The Alliance for Youth (<http://www.americaspromise.org/>).

SERVEnet

(<http://servenet.org/>)
Sponsored by Youth Service America (<http://www.servenet.org/content/ysa/ysainfo/>), an organization committed to community and national service. Includes directory of affiliated organizations and a service called "Volunteer Now!" which matches the skills of volunteers with the non-profit organizations that need them.

Volunteers of America

(<http://www.voa.org>)
Founded in 1896, Volunteers of America is "one of the nation's oldest, largest and most comprehensive nonprofit human service organizations." Serves abused and neglected children, homeless families and individuals, the elderly, youth at risk, people with disabilities and ex-offenders returning to society. Its public policy advocacy role is accomplished through its nationwide affiliates and publications, including *Spirit Magazine* and *The Gazette*.

The Visionaries

(<http://www.horizonmedia.com/visionaries.html>)
Each episode of this PBS series "highlights the positive difference individuals are making in the lives of other people through the vital work of nonprofit organizations." This site contains summaries of the episodes from the first three seasons. ■

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